
Title: Chapter Two

Author: Sirideain

Second Chapter: Ilshenar

Together, Minax and Mondain's most tremendous effort was to create the being, Exodus. Exodus was a bizarre fusion of daemon and machine, created to solidify Mondain's control of the world. Its being was woven inextricably in the fabric of time and Sosaria's physical material. When the Gem shattered, there should have been but one world in each shard: one facet, whose history until the shattering was entirely the same of the world that contained the Gem itself. Instead, Exodus was a bridge uniting time, the Gem, and the land of Sosaria. The shattering left each shard at the beginning of one of many diverging futures, but Exodus gave each shard many diverging pasts as well: the facets.

In each facet, Exodus was projected to a different point in time, and that is the time when history begins to diverge from that of the true world that contains the Gem. For the facet of Ilshenar, that point in Shard of the Gemtime is in the distant past, during the reign of the Juka and Meer. Exodus continued there to

attempt to fulfill its purpose, which was to control the world. The Juka took Exodus as a leader and under his guidance began a new offensive against the Meer, more devastating than anything ever conducted in the original timeline. The Meer in turn escalated their attacks to the point that the existence of both races was threatened. To escape destruction, Exodus again traveled through time. The Meer put themselves in hibernation to follow. Zog either was never born, or never had the chance to gain the Armageddon spell, and life continued.

(Cont.) Through the vast expanse of time the other facets stood barren, humans and gargoyles in Ilshenar multiplied yet remained primitive, until finally culture began to advance, still thousands of years ahead of the rise of the Esidin Empire on Felucca. The primitive humans and gargoyles eventually evolved civilization as we know it and peacefully traded and shared their knowledge. They came to understand magic and the power of the virtues more deeply than any people known to our history. They built the shrines that still stand in Ilshenar and the facet gates that stand by these shrines. Learning from what cultures they found in other facets, they pieced together the nature of the facets and their world.

What they discovered disturbed them, because they realized that

their entire history should
never have come to pass.
They named themselves
the Followers of
Armageddon, as of all the
facets they visited, only
theirs escaped the casting
of the spell. Only they
were descended from the
people who, in every
other facet, were
destroyed. The question
that transfixed them was,
since they found
themselves in time before
the event that created
their world, could the
shattering of the Gem
still be in their future?
What would be the
consequences if it
happened, or did not
happen? They resolved to
prevent the shattering,
thus preventing their own
history and uniting the
shards; however, this
proved impossible. The
history of Ilshenar was
so changed that Mondain
never existed ("Mondain
est an-ailem.") There was
nothing they could try to
prevent.

As the facets'
histories passed the
moment of the shattering
in unison, great
cataclysms assailed them
all. The lands were all
changed, and not one
facet was left untouched.
The facets most
divergent from original
history, however, were
changed the most. Ilshenar
was among these, and at
once its people found
themselves in a new
world, having the
geography as we see it
today. Survival was the
immediate concern, rather
than contemplation of
what had come to pass.
The gargoyles sequestered
themselves in a new home

underground, and the humans built the city of Montor in the Northeast of the new world. At this time lived a woman, Ilshen, who rallied the peoples' will to survive in that difficult time, and this fact is honored in the present name of the facet. The unity of the humans in Montor was not to last, as the place was destroyed in a volcanic eruption. From the refugees of Montor several bands each settled in various places, now called Terort Skitas, Mistas, and Mirtas.

Another group made a home in halls delved into the mountains near the Shrine of Honesty. These scholars were called the Zog Cabal, but have also been called the Followers of Armageddon, since the other inhabitants of Ilshenar have long ceased to think of themselves as such. They were scholars and turned their study away from the facets to the many planes of existence beyond Sosaria. These planes, they found, were not copied within the Gem, but were outside the Gem and in contact with all of them. One of these planes was the source of the wisps, and the scholars learned many things from them. The wisps offered any knowledge, quid pro quo for answers to the many questions of the wisps' own. One important thing the scholars learned was that Xorinia was not the sole inhabitant of its dimension. There were others, and one of these was the dark wisps. The scholars questioned the

dark wisps for answers
their lighter brethren
could not answer, but
what they learned and
what they did with that
knowledge is difficult to
determine. It is clear
though that it lead to
the downfall of human
civilization in Ilshenar.

A timeline cannot
be constructed, but it
seems that the dark
wisps revealed a new
interpretation of the
significanceFoA Stronghold
of Mondain's non-existence
in Ilshenar. Whereas to
the scholars of Terort
Skitas, Mondain's failure
to appear was the
undoing of their plans,
the Zog Cabal believed
that Mondain's
non-existence was
necessary for maintaining
some inscrutable "balance."
Based on this, the
scholars accepted the
dark wisps' urging to
summon... something. There
is no surviving record of
what they summoned, nor
a better explanation of
why. In the records
available from Terort
Skitas, this being is
called only "bal-lem,"
meaning "evil one."
Apparently, the other
humans achieved a limited
victory and imprisoned
this being. Four leaders
of the Zog Cabal, whose
names were Martoo Saul,
Junin Pince, Zendella
Kxriss, and Miron Vehl,
were banished to another
facet as punishment for
their involvement.
However, for some
unknown reason, the
people of Terort Skitas
and Mistas felt that
there was still great evil
at work in Ilshenar. They
evacuated their people and
sealed the facet gates,

to protect the other
facets from whatever evil
lingered in Ilshenar..

After the evacuation,
growing numbers of
monsters encroached ever
further on the few
remaining civilized
inhabitants, until after
many years Gilform the
mage of Britannia opened
the facet gates again.
The Britanni-ans
tentatively explored
Ilshenar and began piecing
together the facts of
what had recently
transpired there. Yet, the
situation became
complicated by ghosts of
Ilshenar's most distant
past. Exodus and the
Juka had ended their
time travel to arrive in
our present, and with
them the Meer emerged
from their hibernation to
renew their war. The
affairs of Ilshenar and
Britannia are by this
time fully intertwined, and
so our tale will rejoin
the war of the Juka and
Meer after the histories
of our own facets have
been told.
